

Interventions to catalyze growth of the women entrepreneurship ecosystem: Corporate and industry associations.

With the existing efforts from industry, corporates, industry associations and MSMEs, we have made a positive impact to create a holistic and inclusive entrepreneurship ecosystem for women. A core focus and pillar of the #UdyamStree campaign, is to garner investment and support from industry leaders to create or further efforts to propel women entrepreneurship in the country by creating a level playing field. As research suggests, boosting women's participation in employment and entrepreneurship in India has the potential to grow the country's GDP by \$ 0.7 trillion by 2025, and simultaneously enhance levels of gender equality and women's economic empowerment. To harness the potential to create a robust economy and achieve this goal, the participation of industry is crucial.



Below mentioned, are interventions that corporates, industry associations and MSMEs can undertake to further create a conducive environment for women entrepreneurs to flourish.

Incubation and acceleration for growth of women entrepreneurs at scale.

- Facilitating a broad-based increase in the number of incubators and accelerators, including remote (online) accelerators, tailored to the unique constraints and skill requirements of women. Expanding accelerators outside of metro cities to broaden access to various elements of scaling know how. For example, through financial planning, digital marketing, taxation and network access.
- Setting up incubators focused on sectors that are traditionally male dominated, (for example agriculture and dairy, retail, mechanical work, and repair, etc.) to ensure entrepreneurship is not reinforcing prevailing gender stereotypes.
- Organising exhibitions, seminars, and vendor development programmes, to offer incubator facilities through which entrepreneurs can manufacture products with minimum investment on infrastructure.
- Setting up women-focused scaling accelerators with sponsorship from influential female and male leaders, to generate targeted mentorship opportunities, strategic guidance, and operational support.

Gender responsive funding through customized products for women entrepreneurs.

- Women-focused funding initiatives in the existent incubator and accelerator ecosystem, such as dedicated pitch days, will encourage women entrepreneurs to build affinity with the investor community, thereby taking a step forward in the direction of success. For example, allotting women entrepreneur-only days for addressing queries and grievances at the banks, to build a gender-responsive narrative of 'openness'.
- Tailored financial products including lending with no collateral or innovative collateral i.e., household assets (for example jewellery), a registry for movable assets and smaller-sized loans.
- Availability and disbursement of tailored, women-friendly financial products such as small-sized, innovative collateral loans.

- Tailored policies for innovative collateral-based lending. Examples include, a registry for movable assets, and spouses with fixed assets who act as a guarantor.
- Existence and fair disbursement of tailored financial products, such as lending with no collateral or innovative collateral, smaller-sized loans (even smaller than Shishu loans in Mudra), and bundled business enablement services.
- Collective pooling of CSR funds dedicated to encouraging women entrepreneurship. Such an approach would enable corporates realise greater impact from working collectively instead of in silos, to accelerate entrepreneurial journeys of women and nurture mutual learning.

Programmatic interventions to enhance capabilities.

- Organise study tours for aspiring and existing women entrepreneurs to enable learning from existing business models. Facilitate their participation in national and international Trade Fairs for setting up linkages with vendors and buyers.
- Encourage participation by aligning women-led enterprises with government flagship programmes such as 'Make in India' and 'Start Up India', and leveraging these enterprises with government-priority sectors.
- Enterprises can leverage Self Help Groups by offering guidance for business specific expertise, to expand current businesses and assist aspiring women entrepreneurs to start their own enterprises.
- Connect successful women entrepreneurs to larger markets to sell their products and services.
- Support efforts towards broadband penetration in villages to facilitate online learning and cost-effective utilisation of existing resources.
- Investors can set up women-focused funds to encourage entrepreneurship and the availability of capital for women entrepreneurs.



Research and design development for an efficient ecosystem.

- Collecting sector-specific data on participation of women entrepreneurs, through research reports and data analysis to record progress levels.
- Design sustainable train-the-trainer programmes to strengthen women entrepreneurship at the grassroot level.
- One-stop loan portals (online, physical) to supply information, guidance, and support to access all existing public and private instruments.
- Encouraging leaders to recognise and address the role of bias - both conscious and unconscious - through training programs.
- Investing in a programme with partner academic institutions to fund science, technology, engineering, and mathematics subjects (STEM), and digital literacy for women in early education.

Leveraging and capacitating knowledge training and skill development.

- Targeted online programmes including sector-specific online courses and start-up guides for starting and scaling businesses in India, to teach basic and practical business skills, along with providing access to resources, digital coaches, and networks to drive continuous engagement.
- Sector-specific workshops, certificate courses and training, to drive participation in sectors that are emerging to offer women more opportunities.
- Focused women-only networks and forums to foster structured connections with investors, suppliers and customers, cascading across metros as well as tier-1, tier-2 and tier-3 cities.
- Conduct digital literacy campaigns to enable skill building and monetisation, via corporate interventions like Amazon Saheli and Google Sathi, to onboard women entrepreneurs on a digital storefront and find opportunities beyond the locality.



Strategic Communications to endorse women entrepreneurship.

- Advocate for women entrepreneurship on social media platforms of the company.
- Conduct sector and geography specific campaigns to facilitate the process of encouraging more aspiring women entrepreneurs.
- Encouraging case studies and reports to offer encouragement of entrepreneurship in gender-balanced ways.
- Creating campaigns and voicing support for local and handmade products by women-led-enterprises, to garner traction and increase market base.